

THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE, AND TRIUMPH OVER
DEATH, IN THE PROSPECT OF GLORY.

W. C. A.
A SERMON

PREACHED ON SUNDAY EVENING, JAN. 24,
MDCCXCVI.

AT

THE METHODIST CHAPEL,
LOWESTOFT,

UPON

The Death of Mrs. Tripp,
OF THAT PLACE.

BY JAMES ANDERSON, P. G.

1789-1840

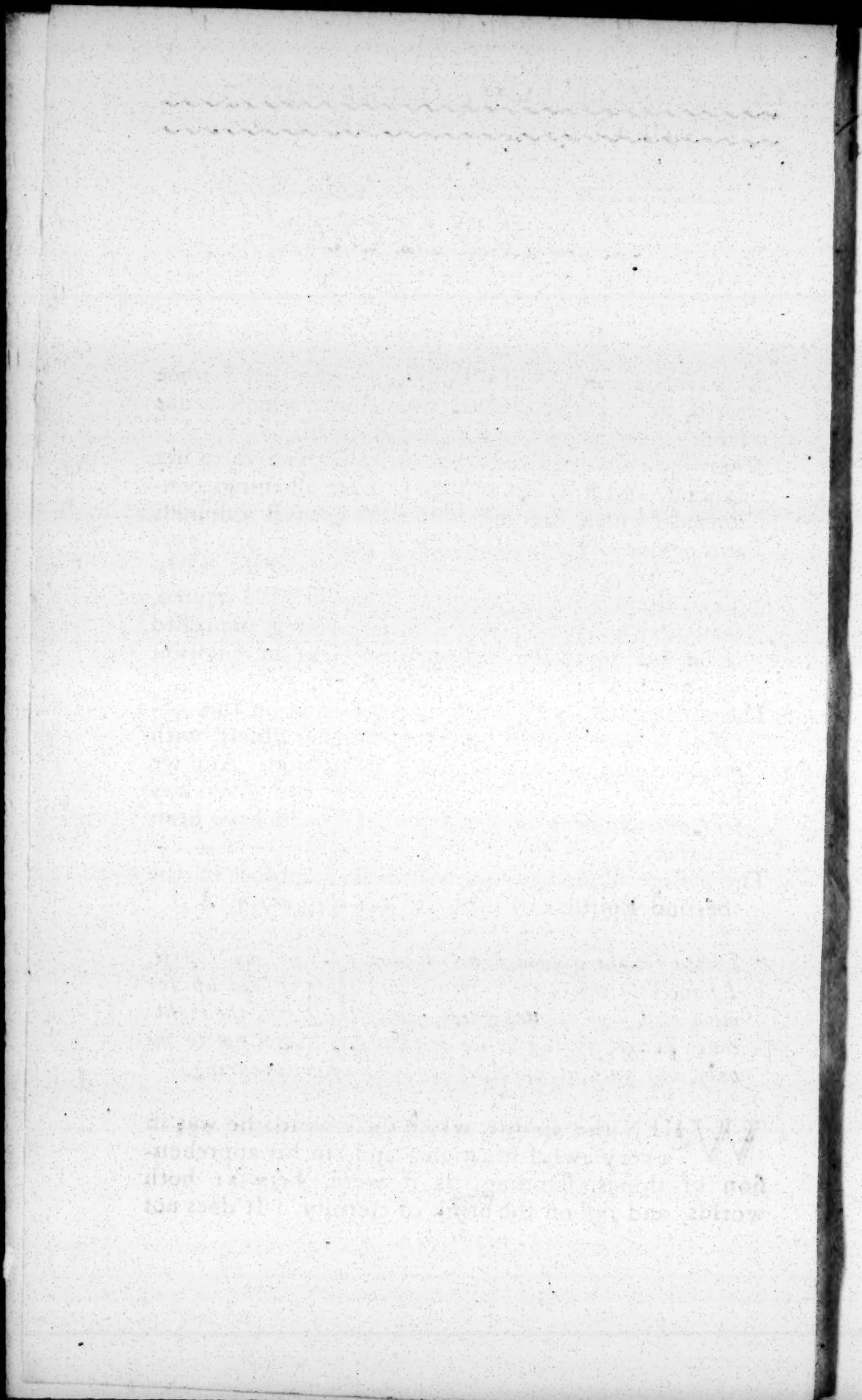
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

Barmouth:

PRINTED, FOR THE AUTHOR, BY
F. BUSH:

AND SOLD AT THE METHODIST PREACHING-HOUSES
IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

1796.



A SERMON.

IT is with a mixture of pleasure and pain that I come forth, at this time, to pay that tribute which is *due* from me to the memory of the deceased.

When she conversed with her husband relative to her funeral, and how she wished to have all things conducted (which she did with the greatest calmness and composure), he asked her if there was any *particular* passage of scripture that she wished should be taken for her *funeral sermon*? To which she replied, that there were none at *present* particularly impressed upon her mind for *that* purpose. As the question was not put again, no text was given.

The passage which I intend to speak from on this occasion was mentioned by *her*, during her illness, with *peculiar* emphasis and apparent satisfaction. And we have reason to believe that if she had given *any* text to have been spoken from, it would have been *no other*.

The passage alluded to you will find recorded in the Second Epistle of Paul to **TIMOTHY**, iv. 7, 8 :

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

WHEN the apostle wrote these words he was in a very awful situation; and, in his apprehension of things, standing, as it were, betwixt both worlds, and *just* on the brink of eternity. It does not

appear, that the apostle was at this time under sentence of death : he was only a prisoner at Rome, as you may see in chapter i. 8. But it is certain, that he had a strong impression upon his mind, that his death was not far distant. And, under the influence of this impression, he says, in verse 6, “ I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is *at hand*.” In this situation, he is employed in reflecting upon the *past*, and taking a survey of the *future*. The result of the inquiry we have in the text—“ I have fought a good fight,” &c.—In which words we may observe,

- I. The excellent part which the apostle was enabled to act.
- II. What his views and expectations were with regard to a future state.—I shall then,
- III. Improve the subject by applying it to the occasion of our present meeting.

I. We are to consider the excellent part which the apostle had acted.

1. He had *fought a good fight*. We are here to conceive of the christian life as a military life. Every real christian is a soldier of Jesus Christ : he is enlisted to fight under the banner of the Son of God : “ to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.” (1 Tim. vi. 12) and the apostle exhorts his son Timothy to “ endure *hardness* as a *good soldier* of Jesus Christ,” that he might thereby be prepared to fight the battles of the Lord courageously, quit himself like a man, (1 Cor. xvi. 13) and put to flight the armies of the aliens. Not like those *cowards* who flee in the *heat* of action, and leave the battle to the strong ; but like the *intrepid* soldier, who, determined to carry victory in his favour at *all events*, rushes on to the conquest, nor stops till he has put his *foot* upon the *necks* of his enemies.

The enemies with which the christian has to grapple are numerous and powerful. He wrestles not only “ against flesh and blood,” but also “ against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high

places."—(Eph. vi. 12.)—The deeds of the body must be mortified: the old man, with his deeds, must be *wholly* put off: every *corrupt* affection must be subdued; and every *unholy* desire sanctified. And, in order that this may be accomplished, the greatest watchfulness and diligence is necessary on the part of the christian. He must watch every emotion of his heart with the *most jealous* attention, and be diligent in the use of the means of grace; that, in the use thereof, he may receive that grace from the Lord, whereby he shall be able to "cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, *perfecting holiness* in the fear of the Lord."—(2 Cor. vii. 1.)—Many are the representations which the scriptures give us of the christian's spiritual and invisible adversary. He is compared to "a roaring lion,"—(1 Pet. v. 8)—and "a great red dragon."—(Rev. xii. 3)—to denote his power and strength, and his bloody cruelty against the people of God. He is called "a serpent,"—(Rev. xii. 9)—to express his wisdom and subtlety, which he makes use of to deceive the unwary and unwatchful christian. This being the case, it will be the wisdom of the christian soldier always to be upon *his* guard; and to be *well* acquainted with the devices of Satan, lest the adversary should come upon him in an unguarded hour. The christian has nothing to expect from this quarter but every effort, on the part of the enemy, in order to his destruction.

He is styled in scripture "the Devil;"—1 Pet. v. 8.—and, agreeable to this, "the accuser of the brethren:"—(Rev. xii. 10.)—He accuses the brethren to *God*, as in the case of Job. He had the effrontery to tell the Almighty, that if he would cut off all the expectations of his servant with regard to the enjoyments of this world, he would *curse him to his face*.—Job i. 11.—He often accuses the brethren to *each other*; and does what he can to set them at variance, that they may "bite and devour one another," and be "consumed of another." (Gal. v. 15.) He is always ready to accuse the returning prodigal to *himself*, by suggesting

"what a great sinner you have been :" by representing to the eye of his mind, his numberless transgressions, and the aggravating circumstances that attended the commission of his crimes ; his sinning against light and knowledge ; against the greatest love ; against the drawings of the spirit, the remonstrances of conscience, and the warnings of providence. This the accuser does, *not* with a view to lead the distressed penitent to the Redeemer for deliverance ; but that he may *dishonour* his God by unbelief, and *abandon* himself to hopeless despair. But let the *returning* sinner remember, that Satan " was a murderer and a liar from the beginning." (Joh. viii. 44.) That the God of *truth* has pronounced the mourner blessed, and has promised that they shall be comforted !—This comfort may be *nearer* the distressed soul than he is aware of. " Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. (Psl. xxx. 5.)

The *world* always has been, and is still a potent enemy to the christian. *Worldly men* are not, cannot be the real friends of the Redeemer, his interest, or his people : for " the carnal mind," in *whomsoever* it is found, " is enmity against God." (Rom. viii. 7.) Some of these, it is true, manifest an *apparent* attachment to Christ, and friendship to his cause and people ; but we are sure it cannot be *real* and *disinterested*. Such friendship does no good in the *end* to the cause of Christ, but is often productive of the most *baneful* consequences. The christian is in greater danger from the *smiles* of the world, than from its *frowns*. The frowns of the world often operate as a powerful *stimulus* to duty, and drives the christian closer to his God : while the smiles of the world act as an *opiate*, weakens devotion, lulls the active powers of the soul to sleep, and steals the heart from God. Ye soldiers of Christ, be upon your *guard*, watching unto prayer ! You are surrounded with enemies who seek your destruction ! But look to Christ, the " captain of your salvation ;" (Heb. ii. 10.) and, as he has conquered all his enemies, " triumphing over them in his cross," (Col. ii. 15.) he will enable

you also to subdue all your enemies, and bring you off
"more than conquerors," (Rom. viii. 37.) for his
name's sake.

" Go up with Christ your head,
Your Captain's footsteps see :
Follow your Captain, and be led
To certain victory."

Christ, as our great captain and leader, has provided a sufficiency of armour to equip the christian soldier for his spiritual conflict. Paul, when speaking of this armour, observes, (2 Cor. x. 4, 5) that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong holds: casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." And, when he writes to the Ephesians, (vi. 11, 13.) he exhorts them to "put on the whole armour of God, that they might be able to stand in the evil day against the wiles of the devil." In the following verses, he gives us a particular description of this armour, and recommends some parts of it in preference to others: "Stand, therefore," says he, "having your loins girt about with *truth*, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God: praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." If the christian is but properly equipped in this armour, and can handle its parts *well*, he will be more than a match for all the powers of hell. But it must be remembered, that there is no armour for the *back*: so that, if the christian is disposed to turn *coward*, he will soon be foiled by his enemies. He

must keep his face towards them, and "not be afraid of their faces ; for the Lord has promised to be with him to deliver him. (Jer. i. 8.) This spiritual conflict must be maintained so long as the christian is in this world : for although he may entirely subdue and conquer the flesh, while he is *yet* a probationer ; yet, still, the world and Satan will renew their attacks, however unsuccessful, with *redoubled violence* : and sometimes it happens, that the *last* effort which Satan makes against the soul is the *strongest*. This being the case, "let not him that *girdeth on* his harness boast himself as he that *putteth it off* : (1 Kin. xx. 11.) it is time enough for the christian to shout "Victory!" in the fullest sense of the word, when "mortality is swallowed up of life."

The apostle calls this conflict "a good fight." It is in the cause of a gracious and good God, who is good and loving to every man, and whose tender mercies are over all his works." (Pf. cxlv. 9.) It is in the cause of truth and holiness : it is a conflict maintained against the enemies of our Lord and his kingdom ; and is in order to "eternal life." (1 Tim. vi. 12.) The apostle could look back upon his past conduct, and say, "I have fought a good fight." At that time he was just about to obtain a *compleat* victory over all his enemies.

2. "He had *finished his course*."—Here he represents the life of a christian under the idea of a *race*. Allusion is here had to the *Olympic games* ; in which different persons ran in a race, and the *foremost* obtained the prize. The apostle, when writing to the Corinthians, (I. ix. 24.) refers to this, where he says, "know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but *one* receiveth the prize?" Therefore *every one* will exert himself to the *uttermost*, and strain every nerve that he may be *first*, and so gain the prize. "So run," says he, "that ye may obtain." If men could strive and exert themselves to such a degree, in order to obtain a "corruptible crown ;"—shall not the christian be as much in earnest, and give *all* diligence to secure that crown which is "incomptible," and which fadeth not.

away? " **I, therefore, so run,**" says the apostle, " not as uncertainly :" for not only one out of the many that run shall receive the crown ; but all those who run well shall be crowned with laurels.

The Lord hath marked out the *path* in which the christian racer is to run : it is the way of holiness, the way of God's commandments. " *I thought on my ways,*" says the psalmist, " and turned my feet unto thy testimonies." (Pf. cxix. 59.) It was not an *irksome* task for him to run in the ways of God's commandments, but rather the *delight* of his soul : for he says, " *I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches.*" (ver. 14.) And again, (ver. 24), " *thy testimonies are my delight.*" Happy are they whose feet are turned into the ways of God's commandments : who have been *previously* exercised with sorrow of heart, for their numerous transgressions of the divine law ; who have obtained remission of sin, through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ ; and who are now *running the race set before them* ; " *laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset them.*" (Heb. xii. 1.) They may expect to meet with opposition from various quarters ; from *professed enemies* and *pretended friends* : and they must not think it strange, if those who are *flesh of their flesh*, and *bone of their bone*, should oppose them. The Redeemer himself has told us, saying, " *I am not come to send peace, but a sword.* *I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law ; and a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*" (Mat. x. 34. 35-6.) Those who are *of the world*, will assuredly oppose those who are *of God* : for one is influenced by a spirit from beneath, and the other by a spirit from above. But those who are running for eternal life must not be discouraged : but imitate the example of Paul, where he says, " *I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus :*" (Phil. iii. 14.) They must beware of the conduct of the foolish Galatians, *they did once run well, but were hindered.* (Gal. v. 7.)

If a *crowd* of difficulties be in the way, they must press through them all (as many of you pressed thro' the crowd *this night* to get into this place) looking to Jesus, who is the *author* till he become the *finisher* of their *faith*. So shall they be able to say, with the apostle, when about to leave the world, *I have finished my course*.

3. He had *kept the faith*.—It is probable he here refers to the *doctrine of faith* in general ; but in particular to the doctrine of the *atonement*, or satisfaction of Christ to divine justice, for the sins of the world ; and the doctrine of *justification by faith* in Christ crucified. These doctrines he had received in the most cordial manner ; and maintained and defended them to the uttermost of his power. The *cross* of Christ was his *glory*. “God forbid,” says he, “that I should glory, save in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” (Gal. vi. 14.) Christ crucified was the *burden* of his theme ; on this subject he delighted to dwell. “We,” says he, “preach Christ *crucified*.” (1 Cor. i. 23.) And he tells the Corinthians, (I. ii. 2.) that while he was among them, he *determined* to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and *him crucified*. No wonder that the apostle gloried in this doctrine, for it is the *great foundation* laid in Zion by the hand of God himself ; upon which is intended to be raised that spiritual building mentioned by the apostle Peter, (1 Pet. ii. 5.) “other foundation can *no man lay*,” so as to do it with safety to his own soul, “than that *is laid*, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. iii. 11.) Those who *hold* the foundation, and yet build upon it, through ignorance, doctrines inimical to the scriptures (called, in the word of God, *wood, hay, and stubble*) ; although their work shall not abide the *fiery trial* ; yet *they*, themselves, shall be saved, although with the *uttermost* difficulty, even “*so as by fire*.” (ver. 12 and 15.) But as for those who *utterly reject* the foundation, I would ask, how shall they escape (Heb. ii. 3.) seeing “*there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins*?” (x. 26.)

The doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ was much insisted on by the apostle. He knew well, that although men are to be justified by *works*, in the sight of their fellow-creatures, (Jam. ii. 24.) and also at the day of judgment; (Mat. xii. 37.) yet a man can only be justified, before God, in the hour of *conversion*, by *faith alone*. Hence the apostle labours to prove this point, when writing to the Romans, (iii. 20.) "Therefore," says he, "by the *deeds* of the *law* there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the *law* is the knowledge of sin." And again, (ver 28.) "therefore we conclude that a man is justified by *faith without* the *deeds* of the *law*." And he, having an opportunity of addressing a large assembly of his own people, the jews, said unto them, "be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the *forgiveness* of sins: and by him all that *believe* are *justified* from all things, from which ye *could not be justified* by the *law of Moses*." (Acts xiii. 38-9.) It appears, then, to have been a fixt maxim with this champion for the faith of Christ, that being justified by *faith* we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.)

Or by "the *faith*," we may understand the *grace* of *faith*, which is a divine principle in the soul, wrought in the heart by the spirit of God, and is therefore, in scripture, called the "gift of God:" (Eph. ii. 8.) and is a gracious *habit* in all those who *live a life of righteousness*, "by the *faith* of the Son of God." (Gal. ii. 20.) It is that *faith* by which we believe on Christ as *our righteousness*; by which we are justified and accepted in the sight of God. By it we are made as certain of the reality of spiritual and eternal things, as we are of our own existence. It is described by the apostle, as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. xi. 1.) It opens a little heaven in the soul, and is accompanied by a peace and joy not to be described. What Prior says of *Charity* may, with the greatest propriety, be said of *Faith*—

“ Soft Peace she brings wherever she arrives :
 She builds our quiet, as she forms our lives ;
 Lays the rough paths of peevish Nature even ;
 And opens in each heart a little heaven.”

This faith works by love to God and man ; (Gal. v. 6.) it purifies the heart from its natural pollution (Acts xv. 9.), and is the victory whereby we overcome the world. It is recorded of Stephen, that he was “ a man full of faith and of the *Holy Ghost*. (Acts vi. 5.) Through faith the ancient worthies “ subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” (Heb. xi. 33-4.) Indeed, it would be almost endless to enumerate the advantages of this *precious faith*. It is attended with a consciousness of the divine presence, of the divine favour ; for “ he that believeth hath the witness in himself ; (1 Joh. v. 10.) a divine *μαρτυρία*, or *testimony*, that he is a *child of God* : or as one has it, “ by the *testimony of the spirit* I mean, an inward impression of the soul, whereby the spirit of God immediately and directly witnesseth to my spirit that I am a child of God, that *Jesus hath loved me, and given himself for me*. That all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.” [Mr. Wesley’s Sermon on the Witness of the Spirit.] This faith the apostle had received, he was enabled to keep it to the end ; and was now about to receive the end of his faith *the salvation of his soul*.” (1 Pet. i. 9.) Happy are they who, when they are about to launch into eternity, can say, with the apostle, “ *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith !* ”

II. The next thing to be considered is, the views and expectations he had with regard to a future state.

1. He expected to receive a *crown* in eternity. This crown is called, in scripture, (Jam. i. 12.) “ a *crown*

of life ;" and (1 Pet. v. 4.) "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." It is promised, by God, unto all those, who, like the apostle, are found " faithful unto death." (Rev. ii. 10.) Their Lord and Master is King of kings, and Lord of lords." (xix. 16.) He has many crowns upon his own head, (xix. 12.) and many to dispose of to those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life : they shall be glorified with God in the heavenly world, and "shine as the firmament," yea, "as the stars, for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.) He will admit them into his immediate presence, and shew them his glory !—Then shall their faces shine brighter than the face of Moses when he came down from the mount, after he had been with God. (Ex. xxxiv. 30.) They shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father ;" (Mat. xiii. 33.) and possess the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. (xxv. 34.)

2. The apostle calls the crown which he expected, *a crown of righteousness* : it was purchased for him by the *righteousness of Christ* : which includes his active and passive obedience ; all that he did and suffered as the favour and substitute of mankind. If Christ had not suffered, there would have been no crowns of glory for *any* of Adam's helpless race : an angry God would have rained upon them snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest ; *this* would have been the portion of their cup. (Pf. xi. 6.) But, oh, amazing love ! Jesus, the everlasting Son of the Father, came down from heaven to earth. He emptied himself of *all* but love : He became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. (Is. lxx. 3.) He hid not his face from spitting—he gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to those that plucked off the hair : he is in an agony and bloody sweat in the garden—he is bound by his enemies who came to take him—he is led from one tribunal to another : he is scourged—clothed with a purple robe, in derision—crowned with thorns—smitten with a reed on the head—sentenced to die—led, as a

lamb to the slaughter, bearing his own cross—he is nailed to the accursed tree—he bleeds—his breast heaves with agony—his father deserts him—he complains—he bows his head, and dies.—Thus did our Saviour go through the *most complicated* scenes of sorrow and distress, that the *crown of righteousness* might be purchased for us. Hence it is, that that happiness and glory, which is designed for the righteous in heaven, is called “the purchased possession.”—(Eph. i. 14.)

It is called a *crown of righteousness*, as it will be given to *none* but those who are righteous, and, *as such*, are prepared for the enjoyment of it. Nothing that is unclean, nothing that defileth, can enter the gates of the New Jerusalem. Without holiness *no* man shall see the Lord. (Heb. xii. 14.) The righteousness of Christ must not only be imputed *to* us for our justification; but we must also have his righteousness implanted *in* us; we must be cleansed from all unrighteousness—(1 Joh. i. 9.)—made pure and holy—righteous before God before we are *fully* prepared to receive the *crown of righteousness*.

This crown will be given as the *reward* of righteousness, for every man shall be rewarded according to his *works*. (Mat. xvi. 26.) Our blessed Lord foretold his disciples, that they would meet with much persecution, for his sake, from an ungodly world; and encourages them to bear it all with resignation to the divine will, by telling them, that *great would be their reward in heaven*. (Mat. v. 12.) And he encourages all those who have it in their power, to do acts of kindness to his followers; assuring them, that not a *cup of water* which is given to a *disciple* in the *name* of Christ, *shall lose its reward*. (Mark ix. 41.) We are sure, that not the *least* act of charity which is done to a believer in Christ, from a proper principle, shall pass unnoticed by the Lord. He considers it as done to himself; (Mat. xxv. 40.) and will assuredly *reward* all our works of *faith*, and labour of *love*, at another day.

The giving of this crown will be an act of righteousness on the part of God. He will thereby evince and declare his faithfulness to his Son, who laid down his life to purchase this crown; and to the faithful followers of Christ, unto whom it is promised. He is truth itself, and cannot lie. The many great and precious promises he has given to the christian, shall all be accomplished in due time.

3. This crown was *laid up* for the apostle; he had not as yet got possession of it: it was laid up in heaven, and kept in reserve for him: he was only heir to it; being an heir of God, and joint heir with Jesus Christ; (Rom. viii. 17.) but was as sure of being put into possession of it, as if he had had it already. The christian, while in this world, enjoys but an *earnest* of his future inheritance: the full possession thereof is reserved for him in heaven, when *mortality shall be swallowed up of life.*

4. He expected to receive this crown from the Lord, as his *righteous judge*—the Lord Jesus Christ: whom Peter calls (Act. x. 36.) “Lord of all.” This same Jesus shall come in the clouds of heaven, at the last great day, “to be judge both of quick and dead.” (ver. 24.) And, in order that *all men* should honour Jesus Christ as they honour the Father—“the *Father* judgeth *no man*; but hath committed *all judgment* to the *Son.*” (Joh. v. 22.) The awful period is drawing near, “when the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him; and then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations.” (Mat. xxv. 31-2.) “We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,” (2 Cor. v. 10.) to undergo the most strict scrutiny at his awful bar. The apostle looked forward to that period, and expected to receive the crown from his judge, as one *worthy* of it; (Rev. iii. 4.) after having gone through the *most close* examination. What honour must this circumstance reflect upon the apostle!

5. The time when he expected to receive this crown—at that day. He may here refer to the day of

his *death*, which he expected was near at hand. It is certain that the souls of those who die in the Lord, do *immediately*, upon their departure from the body, enter into a state of happiness *infinitely superior* to any thing that is to be enjoyed *here*. Our blessed Saviour told the thief upon the cross, who believed in him, that he should be with him in *paradise that very day*. (Luke xxiii. 43.) And it is beyond a doubt, that the happy spirits departed, enjoy the presence of the Saviour in a more *intimate manner* than we can possibly do in this world. The apostle intimates thus much when he says, that to be *absent* from the *body* is to be *present with the Lord*. (2 Cor. v. 8.) But notwithstanding this, the *compleat* crown of glory will not be given until the morning of the resurrection, when the bodies of the saints shall be raised and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. (Phil. iii. 21.) That which is sown a natural body, shall be raised a spiritual body, (Cor. xv. 44.) and be capable of enjoyment *as well* as the soul : and that which is sown a mortal body, shall be raised immortal ; (ver. 53-4.) and, *as such*, capable of enjoying the happiness of heaven, for the *same length of time* with the soul, even to all eternity ! Thus the christian being *compleat* in *soul* and *body*, these two intimate companions being again united ; the Lord will give unto him the crown of righteousness, and he shall reign with his God for ever !

6. The apostle was not satisfied with the prospect of receiving a crown of righteousness *himself* ; but anticipates, with pleasure, the giving of those *numberless crowns to all them also who love his appearing* ! The christian spirit is far from being a selfish spirit : for he not only strives to get to heaven himself, but wishes to take all along with him. He knows, that in his Father's house there are many mansions ; and nothing gives him more heart-felt pleasure, than to see his fellow-creatures in a *fair way* to the enjoyment of them. With rapturous delight does he look forward to that happy period, when the general assembly, and church of the first-born, shall meet in heaven, to be

crowned with glory and immortality, by the hand of their righteous Judge ; and when they, with one consent, shall cast their crowns at his feet, being lost in wonder, love, and praise !

III. I now come to improve the subject, by applying it to the occasion of our present meeting.

We are met to commemorate the death of one, in whom all the relations of wife and mother, and sister in Christ, did sweetly blend.

She was experimentally acquainted with the precious advantages of early piety ; having, at an early period of her life, dedicated herself to God. From a child she endeavoured to recommend herself to God, and man, by an unblameable life and conversation. She was of a pharisaical turn of mind till about the twenty-fourth year of her age ; at which time the Lord was pleased to convince her of the sinfulness of her nature, and the absolute impossibility of recommending herself to God, by any thing she could do, so long as she continued a stranger to a lively faith in Jesus Christ, as *her* Saviour in particular. She was soon after made a happy partaker of *that* faith she felt the want of, and could witness a good confession for the Lord, that he had yet power upon earth to *forgive sins*. This great change was wrought in her mind, by the spirit of God, under the ministry of Mr. SIMON'S, of *Beccles*, baptist-minister,

About eighteen years after, she (being a widow, her first husband being dead) opened her house, for the reception of the methodist preachers, at *Lowestoft*. And, although this step brought a flood of persecution upon her ; yet she made it manifest to all, that she esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. She was not ashamed to be called a Methodist, nor afraid to espouse their cause : firmly believing, that the cause of Methodism was the cause of God. I have every reason in the world to believe, that she never repented taking this step ; but reflected upon it with *heart-felt* pleasure, till her spirit returned to God that gave it.

For the space of thirty-one years she adorned the doctrine of God, her Saviour, in connection with the Methodists; and was *near fifty years* experimentally acquainted with the *power of religion*. In the beginning of her illness she did not feel her mind so comfortable, nor her faith so strong, as she could wish: but she waited upon the Lord in *earnest, confident expectation*, that he would *finish his work in her soul*, before he took her out of the world: and her expectations were not cut off. For, on the Friday before she died, her soul was *fully set at liberty*, and she could *rejoice in Christ as her sanctification*.—The great work was done, and she only waited for the signal to bid a final adieu to all terrestrial good. Having obtained this glorious deliverance, she said to her husband, “now, my dear, I have given you *all up*, and am delivered from *all fear and care*!”—To a friend who stood by her, she said—“I have now turned my *back upon the world*, and have done with *all things here below*!”—adding—“I am afraid I am too *presumptuous*!”—referring to the *strong faith* she had in the Saviour; and her *confident expectation* of a glorious immortality. She continued to manifest the same *triumphant disposition* as long as she retained the use of her senses, *calmly* waiting for the coming of her Lord.

On the Monday following she had it much impressed upon her mind, that on the morrow the great separation would take place. Under the influence of this impression, she said, to the nurse who attended her, “Nurse, I expected to have been down stairs yesterday, but—to-morrow I shall be *clothed in my shroud*: and I have given Mr. Tripp orders, that no *pomp, or outward show*, appear at my funeral!” And, as she said, so it was: for *on Tuesday noon, about half after one*, she fell asleep, as in the arms of Jesus, and entered into the joy of her Lord!—It is worthy of remark, that the *very day* of her death was the day of her *marriage*: so that having lived *exactly thirty years* with her surviving husband, she went to glory to be *joined anew* to her heavenly bridegroom; and to enjoy an

union with him which will be *incapable of dissolution* to the ages of eternity. She died on Tuesday the 19th instant, having kept her bed for *only five days*, in the seventy-sixth year of her age; ripe in years, in good fruit, and ripe for glory.—In her the surviving husband has lost an *affectionate and tender partner*; the society a *distinguished ornament*; and the preachers a *steady and kind friend*.

Many were the excellencies which shone conspicuous in her character. She was remarkable for piety toward her God; and was often in private, breathing out the desires of her soul into the bosom of her *heavenly Father*. This was the soil in which her soul prospered. It was her constant practice to retire into secret both before and after any public mean of grace: so that her soul was not only prepared to receive the *good feed* of the word of God; but it was also watered with the divine blessing: which occasioned such a plentiful crop of *good fruit*, as was evident in her *life and conversation*.

She appeared an utter stranger to that turbulent temper which reigns predominant in the hearts of many; and which occasions so much distress and confusion among the sons of men. The meekness of a Moses, shone with peculiar lustre, in all she said and did. No angry action, no angry word, nor even an angry look, could be discovered in her by the most accurate observer! She conducted herself continually with an *evenness of temper* almost peculiar to herself. Indeed, it may be said of her, with the strictest propriety, that she was *all that*, and more, which is to be seen in the *gentle lamb* and the *harmless dove*!

She was a happy partaker of that faith which is the victory whereby we overcome the world. This world had lost all its charms with her: she was crucified to the world, and the world was crucified to her. Although she was in the world, yet she *lived above it*. Her mind was so much engaged and taken up with spiritual and celestial realities—her affections were so intensely set upon them, that she had no love to spare.

for those trifles of a moment, which pass away in the using, and are “forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.” She was punctually attentive to the duties of *relative* and *social* life, and at once possessed both *Martha’s hands* and *Mary’s heart*.

Good-will and affection to *all*, but in particular to the *friends of Christ*, was another striking trait in her character. A man need only possess the mind that was in Christ, to recommend him to a place in her *benevolent heart*. She was attentive and obliging, ready and willing to do a favour to any one, and to do the meanest offices for the followers of Christ. I verily believe she would have esteemed it an honour to have washed his disciple’s feet. She considered herself as less than the least of all saints, always preferring others to herself. This led to great diffidence of spirit, which she manifested throughout the whole of her life, excepting a few days previous to her death: then, indeed, her faith was so strong and triumphant—her expectations so great—her views so glorious—and her joys so full!—that she broke over all the bounds of her natural timidity and diffidence, and exhibited to the view of those who saw her, the *triumphant conqueror* over earth and hell, sin and the grave.

As she was kind and affectionate to others, she thereby secured the affection of others to herself. Although she is now dead, she still lives in the affections of all who knew her. If I should be called upon to bring proof of the veneration and esteem of her survivors, I would only mention the *crowds* that attended her *corpse* yesterday to the place of interment: the tears that were shed by her afflicted relatives and surrounding friends, when *dust* was committed to its *dust again!*—Behold them stepping forward to the mouth of her grave, eager to take the *last look* of that coffin which concealed from their view *one half* of the dear object of their affection! and, while they are thus gratifying their desires, their *tears of affection* mingle with the dust which is to cover her!—It is with *reluctance* they leave the spot, as if unwilling that their

friend should be *left behind*, for a feast to greedy and destructive reptiles.—But it is the will of heaven—we must submit!—and we ourselves must soon share the same fate—for it is appointed for all men to die; and it is impossible for any of us to escape the fatal stroke! Happy! happy shall it be for us, if we are imitators of her piety; if we follow her, as she followed Christ! Then shall we, with her, prove the truth of that saying—“the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance!”

From what has been said relative to the character of the deceased, you may easily perceive, that the text has been realized in her. She has *fought a good fight*, and is more than conqueror. And although Death retains her in his territories for the present, yet it is but for a little while: the happy period is drawing near when death must relinquish all his conquests; and when mortality shall be swallowed up of life. Although death is the *last* enemy which is to be destroyed, yet his destruction in the *end* is certain.

She has *finished her course*, and finished it well. She started fair in the race for eternal life, nor turned aside to the right hand, or to the left: and after a course of fifty years of the most *unaffected piety*, she gained the prize, and now wears the glorious wreath in the paradise of God.

She has also *kept the faith*, and from the beginning has manifested the most unshaken attachment to the Redeemer, his person, his doctrine, and his interest: and having kept the faith, she has received the end thereof, the compleat salvation of her soul. Her faith is now turned into sight, it is lost in the full enjoyment of its object!

With respect to the *crown of righteousness* mentioned in the text, which is laid up for all them that love his appearing; this she has already in possession. This happiness is hers, at least so far as the soul is capable of enjoying happiness while in a state of separation from the body. When the body shall be raised in the morning of the resurrection, and soul and body be

reunited ; then, on that day shall the compleat crown of righteousness be given to her, and to all them also who love his appearing : and she with them shall reign as " kings and priests to our God " — and all, with one consent sing the " song of Moses and the lamb " — " unto him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," to him be ascribed " power, and riches, wisdom and strength, honour, glory, and blessing for ever and ever ! "

I shall now, in conclusion, address myself to three distinct classes of people.

1. To the congregation in general.— You see, Brethren, what frail mortals we are : we are all bordering upon the grave. In vain shall we boast of our health and strength when sickness attacks us ; for the most healthy and robust amongst us shall be brought low : we know not, but death may be now upon the wing for some of us— eternity may be just at the door — and, oh ! how awful, if death should overtake us before we have an *interest* in Christ — and before we are ready to appear before God ! There is no time to delay : this very night our souls may be required of us ! Let us, then, apply to a God of mercy with all possible expedition ! He *waits* to be gracious, and will in *no wise* cast us out. We have spent too much of our time already in folly and vanity : it is high time for us *now* to be taking some thought for our souls, which must soon appear naked spirits at the bar of God ! — Let me tell you, for your comfort, that there is a fountain opened for sin, and all uncleanness : it is the precious blood of the Son of God, which was shed on Calvary for the sins of the world. This blood *yet* retains its efficacy : it is as able to cleanse from sin *now*, as it was at the day, the hour, the *very moment* it was shed upon the cross ! Repent of all your sins committed against this *God* and *Saviour* ! Believe on Christ as *your Saviour*, with all your heart, and all your sins shall be forgiven ! He will give you that grace whereby you shall be able to live the life of the *righteous* — and your *last end* shall be like his !

2. To the Society.—My dear friends ! The Lord has seen it meet to make a breach in your society. *She*, with whom you used to take sweet counsel, is *no more* ! In vain do I turn to my left to look for her—She is gone—another fills her place—and the place that *once* knew her, shall know her *no more for ever* ! This is a loud call to you, to be *also ready* ! Who next shall be called away is uncertain. Let all of you, then, be getting ready, that, when the Bridegroom shall come, you may go in with him to the *marriage supper* of the lamb. There pain and parting shall be *no more* : you shall meet your friends *again* who have departed in the Lord, and with them praise God and the Lamb for ever !

3. To the relations of the deceased.—My dear, afflicted friends! You, no doubt, feel *much* upon this occasion. Nature surely may drop the tributary tear without sin: it is written, “Jesus wept!” But let me caution you against *immoderate sorrow*. Your dear friend, it is true, has left you; but she is gone to a better place—she is now with her God! What you have to do, is to copy her example—follow her, as she followed Christ! Could you but take aside the veil which conceals from your view the invisible world, and for a moment behold the happiness she is a partaker of—you would suppress your tears: or, if you *wept*, your tears would be tears of *joy*!—She waits to *hail* you *welcome* on the peaceful shore!—

Here some of the relatives were very much affected, which threw the congregation into disorder; and prevented my proceeding any farther.—The solemn service of the night was concluded with prayer, after having sung the following hymn.

HYMN.

1. " And let this feeble body fail,
 And let it faint and die ;
 'My soul shall quit the mournful vale,
 And soar to worlds on high ;
 Shall join the disembodied saints,
 And find it's long-fought rest
 (The only bliss for which it pants)
 On the Redeemer's breast.

2. " In hope of that immortal crown,
 I now the cross sustain ;
 And gladly wander up and down,
 And smile at toil and pain :
 I suffer-on my threescore years,
 Till my Deliverer come,
 And wipe away his servant's tears,
 And take his exile home.

3. " O, what hath Jesu bought for me !—
 Before my ravish'd eyes
 Rivers of life-divine I see,
 And trees of paradise :
 I see a world of spirits, bright,
 Who taste the pleasures there !
 They all are rob'd in spotless white,
 And conquering palms they bear.

4. " O, what are all my sufferings here
 If, Lord, thou count me meet
 With that enraptur'd host t' appear,
 And worship at thy feet !
 Give joy, or grief ; give ease, or pain ;
 Take life or friends away :
 But let me find them all again
 In that eternal day ! ”

THE END.

